

研究ノート

Breaking the Dark—between warp and weft

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It was 1994 when I started the new phase of my life leaving Northern New Mexico behind. There I spent much of my time to create and exhibit works of textiles, immersing myself in the majestic yet often rigorous wilderness of the high desert. The move to the life in Japanese society where everything is on the fast-lane has brought me such a dramatic change.

I have been working with textile design, creating the woven pieces by applying the technique called Kasuri, popularly known as Ikat for the English speaking world. First I must come up with the images I want to execute as a woven piece after making many free-hand drawings in my sketch-book. Then I translate such images with careful attention into the figures and numbers to be used as a blue-print later in the process of binding, tying, dyeing and weaving the threads of warp and weft. During such time-consuming process, my mind becomes translucent by this simple and repetitive work. It becomes a form of meditation. Various things come up in another side of my mind ---the destiny of warp and weft which are the threads of two opposite directions; the act of weaving and tying; and the meaning of working with Kasuri, further, the meaning of life...

I am often reminded of how, symbolically, warp and weft cross each other as if by fate and how this "crossing" compose the foundations of textile design. This brings me to the question of what has been the warp and the weft of my life? These past years, I have been continuously thinking of my two lives across the Pacific Ocean. If the fact that I was born in Japan and brought up as Japanese can be expressed the warp of my existence, the reality in which I placed my roots in the United States could become the weft. In the beginning of both conscious and unconscious levels, my identity as a Japanese was overwhelmed to a great degree by the newness of the American experience. And the fabric of my life there became rather weft-faced, that is to say, giving little importance to my own nationality. I cannot deny it had a significant meaning to me then to think of myself all over

again from the bare-bone aspect of being human. But the life in Northern New Mexico has gradually taught me to weave the two counter strands of my life in balance to survive and strive in a place of cultural and racial differences. It was for me the only way to establish real roots. Upon such realizations, I began to see warp and weft come together with more balance and harmony. It seemed that I was learning to accept my duality to create a new palette of colors. This phase might be referred to as the "balanced weave" in the field of textile design.

This creating the colors with weaving warp and weft still fascinates me. Capturing these colors has become one of my focuses in designing a new piece. The union between the woven structures, selected materials, the colors and textures within the design patterns begin to converge slowly into a kind of visual dialogue with the viewer. In my two weavings, *Breaking the Dark* and *Silver Shadow...Dances*, I intentionally use a different kind of fiber to the warp than to the weft. So Also do I use the inlay technique, combining straight lines and curves, bright and subdued colors to hold these pieces together from the two opposite directions.

Warp and weft can also be read as Yin and Yang. I cannot deny there was a time when I saw myself with frustration as floating in vacuum between these two opposites. It was true that my desire was to belong to the one element and it was my dream which I could not grasp.

After two years of living in the region of Japan where the ancient civilization once reigned, I have finally managed to crash my never-fulfilled dream into pieces, and in so doing have obtained a new realization and a clear mind. I now sense new energies would be created only when we overcome the polarities and go beyond these two conversing elements to embrace them as a whole. In this realm of new energies, I am to rediscover Kasuri, to be captured again by what has been with me for so long.

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